

Hacks and Spooks: Close Encounters of a Strange Kind

By

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Overview

Spies in popular culture

Manning and Snowden revelations

The democratic state and the secret state

Whistleblowers throw a light

The role of ‘official leakers’

The independents...

Questions

Bond and Co

- (images removed for copyright reasons)

Manning – and WikiLeaks

- US Intelligence analyst Bradley Manning sends to WikiLeaks video showing US Army helicopter in Baghdad killing 14 Iraqis (including several children) and two Reuters employees: released on 12 July 2007 as “Collateral Murder”
- 25 July 2010: WikiLeaks releases “Afghan War logs” to *Guardian*, *Der Spiegel*, *New York Times*; 75,000 files available on site
- 22 October 2010 “Iraq War logs” 391, 832 documents on WikiLeaks website: reveal use of torture by Iraqi authorities, tally of Iraqis shot at military checkpoints

Manning: more cables – then jailed



- 29 May 2010: Manning arrested
- 8 November 2010: WikiLeaks releases 251,287 US State Department cables: half are not classified; 6 per cent “secret”
- 21 August 2013: jailed for 35 years

Edward Snowden and the NSA revelations

- May 2013: CIA/NSA computer specialist Ed Snowden released to *Guardian*, *New York Times*, *Der Spiegel*, *Le Monde*, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation details of top secret mass surveillance programs by US and British intelligence: via PRISM, XKeyscore and Tempora programs
- GCHQ stores for up to 30 days personal communications data flowing out of UK to US computer servers of companies such as Twitter, Google and Facebook
- NSA spying on 35 heads of government (including 'allies')
- Breaking into internet encryption systems
- NSA: up to 55,000 employees? Cost \$11bn?
- Fled first to Hong Kong: now holed up somewhere in Russia



‘In the public interest’ ?

- Nb Simon Jenkins, *Guardian*, 20 Nov 2013:
The days of believing our intelligence are over
- The newspapers, notably the *Guardian*, published less than 1 per cent of material judged as clearly in the public interest. This was after consulting (if not always agreeing with) security authorities on both sides of the Atlantic.
- <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/20/days-believing-spy-chiefs-over>
- Alan Rusbridger, editor, told select committee, consulted with government officials and intelligence agencies – including the **FBI, GCHQ, the White House and the Cabinet Office** – on **more than 100 occasions** before the publication of stories

‘Saving the security services’ ?

- Julian Huppert, Liberal Dem MP for Cambridge, in the *Guardian*, 4 December 2013:
- In six months *Guardian* has published only 26 documents from more than 58,000 pieces received. Would we really have seen Snowden upload these directly on to the internet in a WikiLeaks fashion for all and sundry to see and use – unredacted and in raw form? The *Guardian* has saved the agencies from much greater damage and embarrassment

Greenwald/Edmonds controversy

- Glenn Greenwald, to whom Snowden entrusted the secret files, has joined PayPal's billionaire owner Pierre Omidyar in \$250 million investigative journalism project.
- Sibel Edmonds, whistleblower, of boilingfrogspost, claims Snowden documents show links between NSA and PayPal...

Two state system

- Democratic state: parliament, rule of law, free press, public opinion, human rights
- Secret/Security/Deep State/: not a coherent entity: massive with always competing sections: MI5, MI6 and GCHQ, the Cheltenham-based signals spying centre, Special Branch and undercover police units – operating outside law
- US: 16 spy agencies: CIA, NSA, National Reconnaissance Office, National Geospatial Intelligence Program, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Office of Naval Intelligence, Air Intelligence Agency, Coast Guard Agency
- Secret war strategy :secret armies, special forces; secret deployment of drones (targeted assassinations)

Secret state privatised

- Secret state privatised: private security firms; mercenaries
- Supported by secret, shadow economy: one fifth of global GDP held in off-shore banks free from tax: intelligence linked companies (e.g. selling arms, airlines shipping drugs)
- Size? Impossible to say. UK: £2bn? David Davies on *Today* programme, 13 January 2014, said intelligence accounted for 15 per cent of GDP.
- US: Snowden leak in *Washington Post*, August 2013, \$52.6 bn for 2013; plus \$23 bn for military intelligence (published following consultations with military officials)

How law protects secret state

- Official Secrets Act 1911, 1989, Intelligence Services Act of 1993 created Intelligence and Security Committee; Justice and Security Act 2013 allows for secret courts, for instance, to consider allegations of torture against M15
- Defence Advisory Notices – introduced in 1912
- Freedom of Information legislation does not cover intelligence (cf US where FoI covers some activities of FBI)
- Communications Data Bill (dubbed ‘Snoopers Charter’) would require phone and internet companies to collect and store all UK communications data for 12 months – for access by police and security services

‘Is there anything you’ d like to tell us?’ No

- Significantly even members of Cabinet nor National Security Council not aware of GCHQ/NSA mass surveillance activities
- No over-sight by Parliament
- Farce of recent appearance by ‘spymasters’ before intelligence committee (members chosen by the PM): a ‘grilling that would not have scared a puppy’ : Liberty

Parapolitics: theorising the secret state

Draws from deep conservative-liberal suspicion of government in US

And on European anarchist tradition of hostility to state as oppressive system

Identifies *clandestinity* as a state attribute: sustaining illiberal, anti-democratic features of system (previously assumed preserve of revolutionaries, rebels, criminals)

See: *Government of the Shadows: Parapolitics and Criminal Sovereignty*, edited by Eric Wilson, London, Pluto Press: 2009

The journal *Lobster* (www.lobster-magazine.co.uk) edited by Robin Ramsey.
Peter Dale Scott's blog at www.thesleuthjournal.com

Secret state – and whistleblowers

- 1971: Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers (secret bombing of Cambodia and Laos)
- 1975: Philip Agee and “The Company”
- 1976: GCHQ revealed in *Time Out*: led to ABC trial
- 1983: Sarah Tisdall – and cruise missile deployment
- 1985: Clive Ponting and the Belgrano sinking
- 1988: former M15 agent Peter (*Spycatcher*) Wright: plot to oust Harold Wilson
- 1997: David Shayler: British attempt to assassinate Col Gaddafi in 1996; jailed for six months 2002
- Katherine Gun and US intimidation of states prior to attack on Iraq 2003

Pressure on whistleblowers

- 2007 David Keogh, Whitehall communications office, Leo O' Connor, former research to Labour MP, jailed under OSA in 2007 for disclosing contents of minutes of White House meeting between Blair and Bush on 16 April 2004.
- 2013 Peter Francis, undercover cop with National Public Order Intelligence Unit, revealed activities to Rob Evans, Paul Lewis of the *Guardian*
- Channel 4 asked to hand over documents on Francis to police
- NSA planned to investigate 4,000 'insider threats' in 2013
- See <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2013/08/29/revealed-the-black-budget-for-16-u-s-spy-agencies/>
- Eight whistleblowers currently facing jail in US over Felony Act allegations

Other sources: National archives etc

- Release of information from National Archives: MI5, MI6 and Special Branch (listed Confidential, Secret or Top Secret)
E.g. 2008 George Orwell, Koestler, Auden, Spender
- 30 year rule on Cabinet/government info; 50 years on intelligence; 70 years for Dr David Kelly documents ruled by Hutton Inquiry
- But Foreign and Commonwealth Office has hoarded 1.2m files dating back to 1840: in breach of Public Records Act
- Official histories: Jeffery on MI5; Wilkinson on D Notice committee
- Autobiographies/biographies/diaries of politicians, journalists and intelligence officials: Robert Gates' autobiography *Duty* reveals secret strategy to remove Karzai in 2009 elections

Spooks – and official leaks

- Roy Greenslade, media blogger at *Guardian*, :
‘Most tabloid newspapers – or even newspapers in general – are playthings of MI5’
- Journalist (with *Observer* and *Economist*), former MI6 officer and Soviet spy Kim Philby once said MI6 had penetrated ‘English mass media on wide scale’, running agents in the *Daily Telegraph*, *Sunday Times*, *Daily Mirror*, *Financial Times* and the *Observer*
- Spy novelist John le Carré, who worked for MI6 between 1960 and 1964, claimed British secret service then controlled large parts of press – just as they may do today
- Represented in press as “intelligence”, “security”, “Whitehall”, “Home Office”:

Journos and the fog of intelligence

- Defence correspondents largely leakers of the Official Line (*Daily Mail, Telegraph, Times, Sunday Times*)
- Knightley says at least one member of national newspaper staff close links with intelligence
- Media men with ties to intelligence: George Orwell, Ian Fleming, David Astor, Hugh Cudlipp, Cecil King

Independents...

- Glenn Greenwald, Ian Cobain, Paul Lashmar, Richard Norton-Taylor, Phillip Knightley, Stephen Dorril, Mark Curtis, Julie Wheelwright, Stephen Grey, Martin Bright, Tom Bower
- tomdispatch.com (Tom Engelhardt and Nick Turse)
- [Intelnews.org](http://intelnews.org) (Joseph Fitsanakis)
- Cryptome (set up by John Young, 1996: portal for intelligence-related leaks)
- Robin Ramsey (editor of *Lobster*)
- Debkafile (Mossad?)
- Globalresearch.ca (Michel Chossudovsky)

In – and out – of Obama’ s “court”

Trusted

- 1977 Carl Bernstein in *Rolling Stone* revealed 400 top US journalists with close ties to intelligence
- Bob Woodward: famous for his involvement in the Watergate revelations
- Seymour Hersh: famous for My Lai expose and Abu Ghraib revelations

But currently seven whistleblowers charged under Felony Act for endangering country

Questions

- To what extent does an awareness of the secret state change your understanding of British democracy?
- Are you surprised at the extent of the power of intelligence over corporate media?
- To what extent do the revelations about mass intelligence surveillance of internet and phone traffic threaten investigative journalism which depends on confidentiality of sources?
- Do you think a secret state is necessary “to preserve our freedoms” – or is it too powerful – and out of control?
- Will you consider James Bond in a different light now?

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